

OIL SANDS

# Aboriginal People



## our challenge

Some Aboriginal people living near Alberta's oil sands region are concerned about the health and environmental impacts of resource development.

## our actions \*

Alberta is working directly with Aboriginal communities to conduct studies, collect data and monitor changes in the environment.

## working with aboriginal people

- > Alberta's *First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development* helps ensure resource development is balanced with a respect for Treaty rights. The policy is currently being reviewed with input from First Nations, industry and municipalities.
- > Feedback from Aboriginal people is a vital component of the Land-use Framework, providing a voice for Aboriginal people in the province's regional land use planning.
- > The *Protocol Agreement on Government-to-Government Relations* is unique to Alberta and ensures the Premier, Ministers and Grand Chiefs meet together regularly to collaborate on progress and planning.
- > Alberta's *Aboriginal Policy Framework* has been guiding the government-wide approach to Aboriginal relations for more than 10 years, ensuring Aboriginal perspectives and priorities are considered in provincial policy and programs.



Photo courtesy of Syncrude Canada Ltd.

THE OIL SANDS INDUSTRY PROVIDES CAREERS IN A VARIETY OF PROFESSIONS, INCLUDING EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

## aboriginal people in the region

- > An estimated 23,000 Aboriginal people live in Alberta's oil sands areas, with 18 First Nations and six Métis Settlements located in the region. Thousands more live off-reserve and off-settlement.

## health impacts

- > As of February 2009, Alberta Health Services' cancer surveillance confirmed that only two cases of cholangiocarcinoma, a rare form of bile duct cancer, had been found in Fort Chipewyan between 1995 and 2006, instead of the six cases initially reported.
- > Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health agrees with the findings of the Royal Society of Canada expert panel that there is insufficient evidence to link the incidence of cancer in Fort Chipewyan to oil sands operations.
- > As a follow up to the 2009 report, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, Health Canada and Alberta Aboriginal Relations have been meeting with members of the community to better understand their health concerns. A health assessment study is being planned to develop a complete picture on the health status of the community.

## involvement in the oil sands industry

- > Aboriginal people are benefiting from oil sands projects. In 2010, there were more than 1,700 Aboriginal employees in permanent oil sands operations jobs in northeast Alberta. This figure does not include construction-related jobs.
- > Many major oil sands companies have Aboriginal employment policies to recruit local residents. About 10 per cent of the oil sands workforce is Aboriginal.
- > From 1998 to 2010, Aboriginal-owned companies secured over \$5 billion worth of contracts from oil sands companies in the region. This includes \$1.3 billion in 2010 alone.
- > The Fort McKay Group of six companies, completely owned by the Fort McKay First Nations, works extensively with oil sands companies, resulting in more than \$100 million in annual revenue.
- > Aboriginal interests are also protected through the government's 20-year strategic plan *Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands*.



FORT CHIPEWYAN, ALBERTA